

Peter Bethell works for Birmingham City Council as a Transportation Planner. Like many, he has been working from home since March. He misses the personal contact, but he gets a sense of job satisfaction from working in the public interest. Peter keeps in touch with other Christians at work through networks, and he plays a significant part at his home Methodist church.Â

Anne Smith works for the City Council in helping to organise elderly care: she is also working from home. She enjoys supporting people in the community and making a difference. Anne links up with other Christians through her friendship groups, family and her home Roman Catholic Church. She finds that this gives a shared experience and sense of community.

Anne and Peter are both part of an ecumenical chaplaincy network run by Anglican chaplain Peter Sellick and his colleagues. The Chaplaincy has been working with the Birmingham City Council for years. They share prayer requests and meet Wednesday mornings and Thursday lunchtimes for prayer. âIt is important to keep in touch with other Christians, to support each other and to know that you are not alone â even though we are all working from home,â says Peter B.

âThe Chaplaincy have been providing a listening ear and emotional support to staff. We have been going through some of the most turbulent times in the Councilâs history,â says Anne. âDuring the pandemic they have been needed more than ever. They are there for all staff, of any faith or none.â They also provide regular meditation sessions online at lunch times. Many have benefited from these, as sometimes itâs the only supportive interaction they have all day.â

Chaplain standing by a whiteboard in a council office

Peter Sellick senses Godâs presence, not least that the Council is so blessed with people of faith and dedication. âThere have been many redundancies and disagreements in the past few years,â he says. âDespite that, staff have worked so positively to find solutions to the many hardships. Although stresses of workload and home working have chipped away at wellbeing, the commitment to each other and their communities is still strong.â

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